

Michael Ortiz, History

The People's Olympiad and the Long Second World War

I am applying to a Career Enhancement Grant to fund archival research for my new book project, which situates the People's Olympiad and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War within a transnational history of the year 1936 in Europe. The People's Olympiad was an alternative Olympic games organized in Barcelona as a protest against the 1936 "Nazi Olympics" in Berlin. With attendees from more than twenty-two countries across Europe, the People's Olympiad articulated a vision in which anti-fascist sport could reinvigorate a Europe beset by crisis (e.g., Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland, Stalin's Great Purge, and the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, to name just a few). Unfortunately, only days before the games were set to begin, Spain erupted in civil war. Although many athletes fled Barcelona, more than two-hundred enlisted in the famed International Brigades. To date, only a limited number of articles have examined the People's Olympiad. My book-project, the first monograph-length analysis of the games, will broaden the scope of this literature by examining the ways in which organizers and athletes used sport to articulate a powerful expression of anti-fascist solidarity.

Award: \$10,000